Buddhist tourist circuit

*328. MS. MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to link Buddhist tourist circuit in India with such foreign centres in Japan, Thailand, Sri Lanka, etc.; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, *inter-alia* indicating such Buddhist hubs in Orissa that are proposed to be linked with these countries under the above project?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) Ministry of Tourism promotes and publicizes all tourist attractions in the country including the Buddhist sites in major source markets. In addition, a major integrated campaign titled 'Walk with the Buddha' was launched to showcase Buddhist sites in India in the predominantly Buddhist source markets in Far East and South East Asia.

Tourism products including Buddhist pilgrimages in India are also being promoted through bilateral agreements and multilateral forums such as ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), SASEC (South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation), BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) and SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) through distribution of brochures, posters, CD Roms and other collateral in the member countries.

Difference in inflation rates

*329. SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the difference in the inflation rates between Wholesale Price Index and Consumer Prices Indices; and

(b) what are the steps/changes proposed to narrow the difference?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The differences in the inflation rates between Wholesale Price Index and Consumer Price Indices reflect differences in the base year, commodity basket and weighting patterns relevant for different target groups of consumers. The commodity basket and weights for the respective Consumer Price Indices are derived on the basis of group-specific consumer expenditure surveys. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) is an economy wide index covering 435 commodities. Weights of these commodities are derived based on the value of quantities traded in the domestic market. It is a more comprehensive measure of economy-wide inflation available with high frequency. In view of this, no steps as such can be taken to "narrow" the difference.

Ajay Prasad Committee on air navigation

*330. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Ajay Prasad Committee on a master plan on air navigation has recently given its recommendations to Government;

(b) if so, the details of the recommendations made by the Committee;